
EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01 A.M. ET, THURSDAY, AUGUST 4, 2022

August 4, 2022

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VNR: Thur. 8/4/2022, 10:30-11 a.m. ET; repeat 1:30-2 p.m. ET (KU) GALAXY 17
SD transponder 10/slot 4 (dl11903V) bandwidth 6 MHz; symbol rate 3.9787 FEC ¾
HD transponder 10/slot AB (dl11891V) bandwidth 18 MHz; symbol rate 13.235 FEC ¾

Few midsize cars excel in updated side crash test

ARLINGTON, Va. — Only three of seven midsize cars tested earn good or acceptable ratings in the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety's updated side crash test.

The Subaru Outback is the only midsize car to earn a good rating. With somewhat higher levels of occupant compartment intrusion, the Hyundai Sonata and Volkswagen Jetta manage acceptable ratings.

Overall, this initial group of midsize cars did not perform as well as the first batches of [small](#) and [midsize](#) SUVs evaluated earlier. One reason could be their lower ride height.

"With vehicles that sit lower to the ground, the striking barrier hits higher on the door panel," says IIHS President David Harkey. "That potentially puts sedans and wagons at a disadvantage in this evaluation but reflects what happens in a real-world crash when these vehicles are struck by a higher-riding pickup or SUV."

The head-protecting airbags for the driver and rear passenger performed well in the Outback, Sonata and Jetta, contributing to a low risk of head and neck injuries for occupants in both seating positions. However, injury measures were somewhat elevated for the driver's pelvis and rear passenger's torso in the Jetta and the rear passenger's pelvis in the Sonata.

The Honda Accord earns a marginal rating, and the Chevrolet Malibu, Nissan Altima and Toyota Camry earn poor ratings.

There was moderate intrusion of the B-pillar into the occupant compartment of the Accord. Injury measures for the driver's pelvis were somewhat elevated, and the driver's head moved downward past the side curtain airbag to contact the windowsill during the crash.

The Altima and Malibu showed substantial intrusion into the occupant compartment, but the safety cage of the Camry held up well. Injury measures indicated a high risk of torso and pelvis injuries for the driver in the Altima, a moderate risk of torso and pelvis injuries for the driver and high risk of pelvis injuries for the rear passenger in the Camry, and a high risk of head or neck injuries for the driver in the Malibu. In all three vehicles, the heads of either the driver or rear passenger dummy or both slipped below the side curtain airbag to contact the windowsill.

IIHS developed the updated side crash test after [research](#) showed that many of the real-world side impacts that still account for nearly a quarter of passenger vehicle occupant fatalities are more severe than the original evaluation.

The updated side crash test uses a heavier barrier traveling at a higher speed to simulate the striking vehicle. The new barrier weighs 4,200 pounds — close to the weight of today’s midsize SUVs — and strikes the test vehicle at 37 mph, compared with a 3,300-pound barrier traveling at 31 mph in the original evaluation.

For now, the updated test is not included in the IIHS award criteria. However, starting in 2023, a good or acceptable rating will be required for the lower-tier *TOP SAFETY PICK* award and a good rating will be needed for the higher-tier *TOP SAFETY PICK+*.

All seven of these vehicles earn good ratings in the original side test.

	OVERALL SIDE RATING	Driver injury measures				Rear passenger injury measures				
		Structure & safety cage	Head & neck	Torso	Pelvis	Driver head protection	Head & neck	Torso	Pelvis	Rear passenger head protection
2022 Subaru Outback	G	A	G	A	A	G	G	A	G	G
2022 Hyundai Sonata	A	A	G	A	A	G	G	G	M	G
2022 Volkswagen Jetta	A	G	G	A	M	G	G	M	A	G
2022 Honda Accord	M	M	G	A	M	M	G	G	A	G
2022 Toyota Camry	P	A	G	M	M	M	G	A	P	G
2022 Nissan Altima	P	P	M	P	P	M	G	G	G	G
2022 Chevrolet Malibu	P	P	P	M	A	M	G	A	G	M

G Good
 A Acceptable
 M Marginal
 P Poor

For more information, go to [iihs.org](https://www.iihs.org)

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) is an independent, nonprofit scientific and educational organization dedicated to reducing deaths, injuries and property damage from motor vehicle crashes through research and evaluation and through education of consumers, policymakers and safety professionals. IIHS is wholly supported by auto insurers.